

VZCZCXRO6068
RR RUEHDA
DE RUEHNY #0309/01 1121248
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 221248Z APR 09
FM AMEMBASSY OSLO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7498
INFO RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 0238
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0628
RUEHCP/AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN 2531
RUEHHE/AMEMBASSY HELSINKI 8079
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1549
RUEHSM/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM 3394
RUEHDA/AMCONSUL ADANA 0029
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 0017
RHMFIUU/FBI WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 OSLO 000309

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PINR](#) [PTER](#) [KCRM](#) [TU](#) [NO](#)

SUBJECT: FROZEN DELIGHT: NORWAY'S TURKISH MINORITY

1.(SBU) SUMMARY. Turks represent one of Norway's longest-resident immigrant communities, with the first arriving almost fifty years ago, although most have arrived much more recently. Norway was originally a destination for Turkish political refugees but for the last decade or more, Turkish immigrants have sought prosperity. Comprising Norway's sixth largest non-Western minority group, Turks are relatively well-integrated and not a large risk for radicalization, although the population does face some educational, employment and discrimination challenges. END SUMMARY.

WHO ARE THEY AND WHERE ARE THEY FROM?

12. (U) There are currently just over 15,000 Turkish immigrants (first generation) and Norwegian-born to immigrants (second generation) in Norway. Nearly 6,000 reside in Oslo, with the rest largely spread between Bergen, Drammen, and other cities. The first wave of immigrants began to arrive in Norway shortly after the 1960 military coup in Turkey, with others following the 1971 and 1980 coups. These immigrants comprised mostly of Kurds, elites, and left-leaning intellectuals came to Norway for political refuge and have found the Social-Democrat politics of Scandinavia a natural fit. The far larger and more recent group of immigrants is more conservative, less educated and came to Norway for jobs.

3.(U) The Turkish population is quickly growing and it is estimated that it could soon rank among the top four largest non-Western immigrant communities in Norway. Part of this increase is a result of family growth, through high birth rates and family reunification. Interestingly, tourism is also playing a role. Many of the newest immigrants are from Turkey's numerous popular summer towns and beach resorts which are frequented by Norwegian tourists. Individuals on holiday visit these destinations and often meet men or women who eventually end up moving to Norway with their significant other.

4.(U) Politically, today most Norwegian Turks are conservative (excluding, of course, the smaller group of initial immigrants). Mertefe Bartinlioglu, Norway's highest-profile Turk in politics, is on the Oslo city council and belongs to the Høyre (Conservative) Party, which advocates fiscal free market policies, low taxes, and lower government involvement with the economy.

HOW WELL ARE THEY INTEGRATING?

15. (U) Turks in Norway are generally considered to have integrated well into Norwegian society, but still face considerable problems. The community is rather tight and cohesive. They have relatively little interaction with other large immigrant groups with which one might expect them to have shared interests, such as the Pakistanis, Somalis, and Iraqis. Through work, religion, and some social organizations, they do, however, have some association with immigrants from the Balkans, smaller Arab groups, and the Greeks.

6.(U) Mertefe Bartinlioglu says one problem is that the community "has no role models" to provide motivation and a good example, so many have difficulty finding work, especially women. To his credit, Bartinlioglu has worked to establish small business cooperatives (often restaurants and catering businesses) with Turkish women who would otherwise likely have trouble working due to lack of skills and/or education.

7.(U) The Turkish community's education numbers are well below average for the country, and even quite low among immigrants in general. Turks have among the poorest education numbers of all immigrants in Norway; a massive 40.4% of the population has only a primary school education or less. Of registered 16-18 year old first generation

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immigrants, only just over 50% are enrolled in upper secondary education, which is quite low. Second generation immigrants aged 16-18 fare much better, with close to 90% enrolled in upper secondary education--basically on par with most other immigrant groups.

8.(U) Turkish women, although posting higher numbers than their male counterparts, are still doing especially badly compared to the greater population. Thirty-three percent have less than an upper secondary education; the female immigrant population average for the category is 15.1% and the average among all females in Norway is 23.0%.

9.(U) Tertiary education, although rare among first generation Turkish immigrants, shows some signs of promise for the second generation, which has around 20% of 19-24 year olds enrolled in classes. Still, this is of course very low, even among immigrants. When comparing Turkish women, for example, with other groups, many have more than twice the level of women enrolled in tertiary education as the Turks. The small percentage of Turks fortunate enough to pursue tertiary education do, however, enjoy support from numerous student groups and social organizations. These can be vital in establishing professional contacts and are often quite helpful with setting up members in successful careers after graduation.

10.(U) Electoral turnout is also notably low among eligible Turkish immigrants. The average turnout among all eligible voters in the 2007 municipal and county election was 40.3%--comparable to non-presidential elections in the U.S. Turkish turnout, however, was a considerably lower 36.4% of eligible voters. Women's participation was also low. The national average was 41.7%, while only 35.8% of Turkish women voted. Anecdotal evidence shows a higher than usual number of Turkish-Norwegians involved in local politics, perhaps demonstrating the potential for the second generation of immigrants.

11.(U) Employment is one area where, although still below where they should be, Turks have some cause for optimism. Around 55% of persons aged 15-74 years are employed, not far below the total immigrant average of about 63%. As is the

case nationally and virtually across the board for all immigrants, a lower percentage of Turkish women are employed than men. The relative difference in employment between the genders is among the most pronounced of any community, however, with over 53% more men working than women. For comparison, nationally about 9% more men than women are employed, and among all immigrants this number is about 21%. Common forms of employment are as cooks, small restaurant owners, cleaners, barbers, and taxi drivers. Turks are not merely resigned to menial jobs, however. Many are successful professionals--doctors, lawyers, business owners, etc. Bartinlioglu, for example, is the owner of a food import business, in addition to being a full-time city council member.

IS RADICALIZATION A RISK?

¶12. (SBU) Discrimination can be a telling marker of both integration and risk for radicalization. When asked if they have experienced discrimination of any kind, 48.8% of Turks answer "No." This may sound encouraging at first, but when considering the average among all immigrant groups--55.6% giving a "No" answer--it is obvious that many Turks feel they are subject to considerably more discrimination than other immigrants. In fact, the only immigrants that say they have been subject to discrimination more often than the Turks are the Iraqis, Iranians, and Somalis.

¶13. (SBU) Turks are by any measure one of Norway's most religious immigrant communities reflecting the conservative nature of the majority of recent immigrants. They are rivaled in religiosity only by the Somalis and Pakistanis. When asked how important religion is in their life, with "1" being "not important at all" and "10" being "very important", the overall Turkish average is about 7.5. About 50% of the

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Turkish community actually answered "10". Total immigrant average is actually not far below the Turks at around 6.9, although the average is somewhat skewed because of the higher importance ratings given by the far more numerous Somali and Pakistani populations. Many communities are far less religious. The Iranian community, for example, which is very similar in size and integration to the Turks, scores only around 3.9, meaning they are far less religious (in fact, the least religious of any immigrant population). As would be expected, religious activity is also quite high among Turks, with most attending around 24 religious gatherings or prayers arranged by the community per year. The immigrant average is ¶15. Again, only the Pakistanis, at 31, and the Somalis, at 25, attend more religious activities on average. Male participation is considerably higher among all these mentioned groups, with the exception of the Iranians.

14.(SBU) The importance of these numbers should not be exaggerated, however. There is little indication of Turkish radicalization in Norway. These observations have been provided more to highlight two potential areas of concern rather than to paint a broad picture of radicalization among the community in its current state.

COMMENT

¶15. (SBU) Despite poor statistics in many areas, the large Turkish population has a good reputation of being successfully integrated into Norwegian society. The community has shown no signs of radicalization. Quite to the contrary, there is every indication that it's problems with employment, discrimination, and education will largely remedy themselves with the second generation. Any risk of radicalization must therefore be considered minimal, although if discrimination and lack of economic success were to

increase dramatically by any substantial amount this could be
cause for concern and warrant a reevaluation of their
situation. END COMMENT.
WHITNEY